

Session 6B: Restoration Projects

Questions & Answers

Q: It looked like from the initial slides that it looked like the eastside was having a harder time than the Westside. I wondered why that was or were they different types of wetland projects or why that might be?

Patricia Johnson

A: Well, number one, it's kind of hard to say that because the sample size on the eastside was so much smaller that it was on the Westside; there were 38 projects on the westside and only seven projects on the eastside. So maybe it was just those seven projects that were doing a little worse, that's a possibility. But I would also say that there's less follow-up on the eastside than there is on the Westside. It's just different conditions over there. And know all of them were implemented; they were just kind of in varying stages of not being implemented to plan, for example. There was one site that was required to have buffer plantings and we did not find any buffer plantings when we went out there. It's possible that they planted them and they all died, we don't know, but we didn't find any buffer plantings so that's the kind of thing that we didn't find.

Q: What was the average age of the site that you went to? How long it had been since the mitigation had been done? And it had been five years. And what was the timeframe, from what years did you look at the permits being issued?

A: The permits we looked at were issued between 1992 and 1996 and that had to do with accuracy of information in the Corps database and the fact that projects that were permitted after 1996. There was a much higher chance that they wouldn't have time to construct. And then there was kind of a range of age of sites—most of them were older than a year and probably between two and four years old. That was another slide that I cut because I didn't think I would have time to get to it.

Q: You mentioned you had trouble finding data, and I was wondering what role the local government had because of critical area ordinances? Is Department of Ecology always necessarily involved with the mitigation project or would the files be with the local government?

A: That's a good point. We did not look at any strictly local projects, that was kind of outside the bounds of this study. We were strictly looking at projects that were issued through the Corps of Engineers 404 Program or Ecology's 401 program. There were a couple of projects that were covered under nationwide permits where the nationwide permit mentioned that mitigation would be required under a certain county's critical areas ordinance and if it was mentioned in the nationwide permit, then it was included in the study. If there was no mention of it, then we did not go in search of projects that were required by the local jurisdiction. We would recommend that local jurisdictions do a similar study on their own. When we initially were planning this study we thought about including local projects and just decided that if it was a nightmare getting information on state and federal projects, it would be even more of a nightmare getting information on local projects.

[Question not recorded.]

A: It was including the mitigation ratios. Success, we just looked at permit compliance, we did not look at success as far as attaining the required acreage. That was something we looked at in Phase II, and actually we found that our preliminary results at least indicate, generally, the sites that are implemented are doing a pretty good job of attaining the wetland acreage that they are shooting for. But the thing to remember is that the highest amount of that acreage comes from for example, enhancement. I think like 80 percent of that high number, that 572 acres was enhancement, which is already existing wetlands so the actual amount of creation and restoration is pretty small compared to the amount of enhancement that is going on out there.

David Low

Q: What management actions are triggered if those criteria are or are not met?

A: That's probably a question for Curtis, but my understanding is all of the information we gather will be reviewed by the panel, the Elliot Bay Duwamish Restoration Program panel and they will come to a decision.

Q: Was there plans to do salt marsh or freshwater transplants?

A: Yes, depending on the site, there were intertidal and marsh plants planted. Some of the pictures you couldn't see it very well, but they have goose-exclusion devices to help those get reestablished, so there's intertidal marsh plants as well as the riparian.

Q: You are going to have to do excavating to get the slopes back...on that site that they have not worked on yet. The soil that you bring in, is that going to be types found naturally in that area or how are they going to allow for this?

A: I believe it's taken from other areas. Primarily they are just going to be removing soils there I believe. But there won't be any soil brought in from outside the immediate area I don't believe.

David Low

Q: I am concerned about whether the old pilings on this side and also on the Duwamish are considered as habitat for some wildlife such as purple martins, which you can see even in your slides, that there were some nest boxes on those pilings?

A: Yes, and we did not cut down the pilings that had nest boxes on them, that was definitely a concern that was raised by the public and the pilings with nest boxes tended to be 100 to 150 feet or so away from the shoreline, and the ones that we cut down were within about 10 to 20 feet of the shoreline and in that location it was really too close to be undisturbed habitat because in that location, you are within about 100 feet of Marine View Drive and so the traffic noise was an issue. But yes, we did think about that.

Q: I was just wondering if you could clarify on cost issues. You mentioned a cost about construction, but I'm interested to know what the project cost in totality—planning, permitting. Who owned the property and how that was involved?

A: The construction was probably about 40 percent of the overall cost on this project. That includes the planning, the permitting, the sampling that went on before the construction work happened. There was also a fairly significant cost, I think, before we started working on the project two years ago within the trustee group and I don't have any sense on how those costs would be distributed to a particular project like this.

Q: Since it's such a small area it looks like it could taken over by those blackberries again very soon, who's responsible for maintaining this now, you said this is privately owned?

A: It is Puyallup Tribal trust land. It is held in trust by the US government for the Puyallup Tribe, and so they are actually the landowner so to speak and we haven't developed a specific maintenance plan. I know the Citizens for a Health Bay in Tacoma is very actively interested in many of these types of projects, and so I think to the extent that we can, we will involve them in those monitoring and maintenance issues. The monitoring plan will have adaptive management triggers in it that will deal with issues like invasive species although there may not be specific numbers like if there's 10 percent invasive species, then go out and dig them all up. It may be more general than that but there is an effort to deal with those sorts of issues.

Colin Wagoner

Q: My first question has to deal with predation on your plants that you are going to install. As we know, Commencement Bay has fairly limited quality habitats and speaking from experience in restoration in the bay itself, you can almost expect pickleweed to be devastated by geese. There's a huge factor to be considered. Did you consider that, are you prepared to deal with that because the

mouth of the Hylebos all the pickleweed was basically a complete failure just because of predation among the geese?

A: Our plan is to use a goose-exclusion net. The site that I visited in the Commencement Bay area that seems to be successful is the Rhone-Poulenc Site, and so we are going to use a netting system. Something like that that will be installed over the saltmarsh vegetation. We will see how it works. There's other techniques that I have seen advertised where there is noise devices and so forth, but we are going with the low-tech approach first.

Q: ...You use straw as your erosion control. Did you consider your source of straw and are you familiar with the seed that typically comes in with straw bales like that?

A: We required weed-free straw, that was one of the specifications in the contract.

Q: Are you aware the Army Corps of Engineers is in the process of creating programmatic biological evaluations to streamline the permitting process for restoration projects?

A: I have heard of something like that in the Portland district, is that what you are referring to?

Q: Actually, it's here in Washington. The Seattle office is getting involved in...you [are] probably familiar with programmatic biological evaluations as streamlining. I think it would be a great opportunity. I know it's something they are working on right now. I deal a lot with the regulatory office of the Army Corps and an opportunity for an inter-agency cooperation, which, unfortunately, is sorely lacking. You might want to approach them and give them the benefit of your experience. Just a technical question. I am assuming that those piles that you removed were creosote-treated piles? OK, we are involved in a lot of pile extraction/replacement and such, why did you cut off the piles rather than extracting the piles?

A: It was a cost benefit decision as much as anything, we just wanted to keep the costs directed towards the restoration efforts and taking the piles out was as much as anything an aesthetic issue.

Q: We have been told that extracting the piles completely out of the substrate leads to less contamination than cutting them off. There's some thought that cutting them off and adding fill is the best way of doing, so I was curious if there was contaminants issue or the creosote leaking since creosote stabilizes, supposedly after a certain point, I was just wondering as far as contamination which is the better technique?

A: I am actually not sure, I have not looked into that in any great detail so I can't really answer that question.

Byron Rot

Q: The first question is for my own curiosity. I want to know why Weyerhaeuser did not want to sell the land to the tribe. My second question is it says that the relocation of the creek by doing that you are going to lose a lot of established tree cover and also streams are very active, so what's going to happen with the old channel?

A: I don't know why Weyerhaeuser did not want to sell to the tribe. It was a manager's personal decision in their real estate department. There is a mature alder canopy, if you want to call it that, that's along the channel, the channel is heavily riprapped from Highway 101 upstream so we are trading short-term. There's going to be a fairly long-term impact in terms of temperature and other things as a new canopy grows, but we feel that the tradeoffs are worth it, really, in the long-term. There is going to channel movement. We fully expect what we anticipate what's going to happen is the channel...if there is any flooding the flooding is going to go to the west and actually there was something I didn't show you where there is another double box culvert that was further to the west and so that would serve as overflow or as an escape route for floodwaters.